

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00889 171153Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03 OMB-01 /052 W
-----066206 171159Z /21

O 171045Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6834
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0889

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT LE
SUBJ: ROCKY ROAD TO PEACE: EPISODE NO. 3: THE SYRIANS COME
DOWN LIKE A WOLF ON THE FOLD?

1. SHORTLY AFTER DESPATCH OF OUR 0867, I.E., AT ABOUT 1745
FEB. 16, DANY CHAMOUN CALLED MOLINEAUX TO SAY HE DID NOT
THINK SYRIANS WERE GOING TO ACCEPT AGREEMENT DESCRIBED IN
PARA. 4 OF THAT TELEGRAM. AT 2030 CAMILLE CHAMOUN CALLED
ME AT HOME TO SAY HIS PEOPLE WERE VERY DISTURBED BY INFORMA-
TION THEY HAD THAT SYRIAN TROOPS WERE MOVING OVER FROM THE
BEKAA AND GETTING READY TO ATTACK EAST BEIRUT. DANY CHAMOUN
THEN CAME ON TELEPHONE TO GIVE ME DETAILED DESCRIPTION. HE
SAID SYRIAN BRIGADE HAD MOVED OUT OF BEKAA, LEAVING LEBANESE
ARMY IN COMMAND OF CHECKPOINTS AND HAD APPEARED AT DAHR
AL-BAIDAR AND DHOUR ASH-SHWAYR. THEY HAD ALSO MOVED A
SPECIAL FORCES CONTINGENT FROM JUNIEH TO POSITIONS IN SIN
AL-FIL AND COMMANDING DOG RIVER TUNNEL. HE AND HIS FATHER WERE
CONCERNED THAT SYRIANS WERE GETTING READY TO MAKE CONCERTED
ATTACK ON EAST BEIRUT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00889 171153Z

2. I CALLED OUR DATT WHO PROCEEDED MAKE DETAILED RECONNAISSANCE
AND FOUND NO INDICATION OF LARGE SYRIAN UNITS MOVING ON
BEIRUT. THIS MORNING'S LE REVEIL (CHAMOUNIST) AND ISRAELI
RADIO CARRIED DETAILED STATEMENT REGARDING SYRIAN TROOPS
MOVEMENTS. TEXT AS IN LE REVEIL IS AS FOLLOWS:

QTE A SPOKESMAN OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY YESTERDAY EVENING

ACCUSED SYRIANS OF PREPARING A MAJOR MILITARY OFFENSIVE IN LEBANON AND AFFIRMED THAT SYRIAN TROOPS HAD ENCIRCLED THE CHRISTIAN SECTOR IN EAST BEIRUT WITH THE AIM OF LAUNCHING A STRATEGIC ATTACK, REPORTED REUTERS. . . THE ANNOUNCEMENT SPECIFIED THAT A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF SYRIAN TROOPS, ESTIMATED AT 18,000 MEN, 220 TANKS AND SEVERAL BATTERIES OF ARTILLERY, HAD BEEN SPOTTED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON ON A LINE ENCIRCLING THE EASTERN SECTOR. . . END QTE

3. LE REVEIL ALSO REPORTED THAT ADF FORCES YESTERDAY TRIED TO TAKE UP POSITION AT THE ST. JOSEPH CONVENT LOCATED BETWEEN NAHR AL KALB AND JOUNIEH. FATHER CHARBEL KASSIS INTERVENED, HOWEVER, WITH THE COMMAND OF THE ADF AND PREVENTED THE TROOPS FROM DOING SO, THE PAPER SAID. LE REVEIL CONTINUED THAT MOST OF THE SYRIAN FORCES IN AKAR AND IN OTHER REGIONS OF NORTH LEBANON AND THE BEKAA HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE EAST BEIRUT/METN AREAS. THIRTY TROOPS TRANSPORTS ARRIVED AT DHOUR CHOUEIR YESTERDAY MORNING. THEY INSTALLED ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS. A 160 MM ARTILLERY PIECE, AS WELL AS 115 VEHICLES FROM THE BEKAA, WERE MOVING TOWARDS, ON THE ONE HAND, AYNTOURA VIA ZAHLE, AYN HAZIR, TARSHICHE AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, TOWARD DAHR AL-BAIDAR, HAMMANA AND KOUR NAYAL. ELSEWHERE, 25 TANKS AND 35 TROOPS TRANSPORTS WERE STATIONED AT DBAYE, WHILE THE NAHR AL KALB DAM
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00889 171153Z

WAS REINFORCED WITH MEN AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT. IN THE FAYYADIYAH AND YARZE AREAS, 60 TROOP TRANSPORTS WITH HEAVY ARMAMENT WERE SEEN TO ARRIVE.

4. CHAMOUNS ALSO CALLED BRITISH AMBASSADOR WHO IN TURN CALLED ME AND WE AGREED THAT FIRST STEP SHOULD BE FOR OUR MILITARY ATTACHES TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER REPORT WAS CORRECT; WE ALSO AGREED THERE NOT MUCH WE COULD DO ABOUT IT IF IT WAS. FRENCH AMBASSADOR RECEIVED SIMILAR CALL AND REACTED IN SIMILAR FASHION.

5. AT 2130 FONMIN BOUTROS CALLED AND I TOLD HIM WHAT CHAMOUNS HAD TOLD ME. HE SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER. HE SEEMED FAIRLY RELAXED AND SINCE HE LIVES IN EAST BEIRUT, I ASSUME HE WAS CONFIDENT IT WAS NOT GOING TO BE BOMBARDED.

6. SYRIAN INTENTIONS REMAIN A MAJOR LOCAL CONCERN. MARONITES OF EAST BEIRUT SEEM TO BE ON EDGE OF PANIC, AND ALTHOUGH LIFE IN TOWN APPEARS PRETTY NORMAL TODAY, THERE IS GREAT DEAL OF UNDERLYING TENSION. SITUATION IS EXPLOSIVE. I PERSONALLY BELIEVE WE ARE GOING TO ROCK ALONG LIKE THIS FOR SOME TIME WITHOUT MAJOR CATACLYSM, BUT I DO NOT HAVE UNANIMOUS

SUPPORT FOR THIS POSITION FROM MY STAFF, SEVERAL OF WHOM ARE
CONVINCED THAT THE SITUATION IS GOING TO DETERIORATE. THIS
PROMISTES TO BE AN INTERESTING WEEKEND.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PEACE PLANS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT00889
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780073-0890
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780244/aaaabknq.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dc6047d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3566828
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROCKY ROAD TO PEACE: EPISODE NO. 3: THE SYRIANS COME DOWN LIKE A WOLF ON THE FOLD?
TAGS: PINT, LE, SY, (CHAMOUN, DANY), (PARKER, RICHARD B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dc6047d5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014